

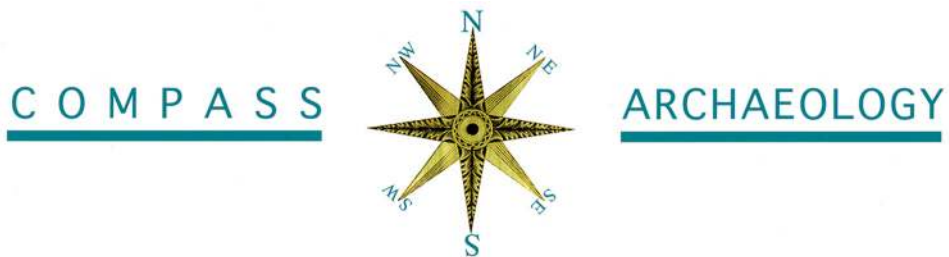
AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL, MEANLEY ROAD

London Borough of Newham, E12

An Archaeological Watching Brief



August 2011



AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL, MEANLEY ROAD
LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM, E12
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SITE CODE: AVE11
NGR: TQ 4224 8543 (centre)

Planning Application No: 11/00112/LA3

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August 2011

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Abstract

An Archaeological Watching Brief was conducted at Avenue Primary School in the London Borough of Newham during July and August 2011, in preparation for the construction of new school buildings.

Three large, open cut, soakaway trenches were observed. No significant archaeological deposits were observed beyond a buried subsoil and several instances of remains relating to Victorian terraced housing that once crossed the site. A number of these properties were destroyed by bombing during WW2 and the site sat vacant until the building of the school. The majority of the exposed deposits were natural gravels devoid of archaeology and directly overlain by 19th century or later development.

On the basis of these results it was agreed with English Heritage that no further archaeological monitoring should take place.

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Site location Plan, (fig.3), courtesy of client Jerram Falkus & FraserBownMackennaArchitect

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report details the results of an Archaeological watching brief conducted during groundworks at the Avenue Primary School, Meanley Road, London Borough of Newham, between 25th July and 18th August 2011.
- 1.2 Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during contractors' groundworks, further to a planning condition (Application No: 11/00112/LA3) and in response to a recommendation made by English Heritage for an archaeological watching brief. The project was commissioned by Jerram Falkus Construction Ltd., and advice was taken from Jane Sidell of English Heritage.



Fig. 1: Site location, school boundary in blue

2 Site Location and Geology

- 2.1 The site is located along the west side of Meanley Road, Manor Park, Lower Ilford, and is bounded to the west by properties fronting on to Snowhill Road and Greenhill Grove, to the north by terraced properties fronting onto Meanley Road and Herbert Road and to the south by terraced properties along Meanley Road and Nine Acres Close.

The site sits at approximately +10.4m OD and is located on an area of Taplow River Terrace Gravel overlying London Clay. A geotechnical survey of the site has taken place by Ste Analytical Services Ltd. in September 2009 and four test pits and two boreholes were sunk across the areas of new development. The geotechnical survey revealed a general profile of made ground to *circa* 700mm below the current ground surface underlain by natural sands and gravels.

3 Archaeological and historical background

Archaeology forms part of the London Borough of Newham's Unitary Development Plan (UDP June 1995), which contains policies relating to archaeological remains and sites with archaeological potential. The UDP Proposals Map shows areas of the borough that have been defined as Archaeological Priority Areas; the study site lies adjacent to an Archaeological Priority Area. There were no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings affected by these works.

A desk-based assessment of the site was undertaken by PCA in 2003 prior to the construction of the new extension to the school in 2004. The DBA identified that there was a high potential for uncovering late Post-Medieval (Victorian) residential remains and low to moderate potential for uncovering Roman and Medieval remains¹. Discussions with Jane Sidell in preparation for the WSI highlighted the fact that the remains of the Victorian buildings are of low-grade archaeological significance and although their presence was to be noted and recorded, the main focus of this watching brief was to record any prehistoric to medieval remains predating the Victorian residential development of the area. It should be noted that intact Victorian buildings still survive in their entirety in the surrounding streets².

The London Archaeological Archive Resource Centre (LAARC) database recorded ten archaeological investigations conducted within the area, but none of these had revealed significant archaeological deposits. Therefore, the following archaeological potential of the site has been extrapolated from a few chance finds that have been recovered from the vicinity.

3.1 Prehistoric

The London Borough of Newham has a wealth of early prehistoric material but this is really in the immediate valley of the rivers Lea and to a lesser degree the River Roding. The site lies about 1.2km to the west of the River Roding and about 5km to the east of the River Lea and therefore lies just outside of this core zone. In later prehistory the better drained gravel terraces and fertile river valleys would have been quite densely occupied with settlement evidence most probable from the Bronze Age (2,000 to 600 BC), particularly the later Bronze Age.

The 2003 desk based assessment of the site noted that there has been some evidence of Palaeolithic remains within the vicinity of the proposed redevelopment. During building works in Carlyle Road *circa* 1890, animal remains were recovered from a deep sand deposit (SMR 061616). The sand deposit was sealed by a sand and gravel deposit containing a Palaeolithic flint

¹ Sadarangani, F. (February 2003) *An Archaeological Desk Top Assessment of land at Avenue Primary School, Meanley Road, Manor Park, London Borough of Newham E12 6AR*. Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. In house publication

² Jane Sidell 20th May 2011 *pers comm*.

(SMR 060231). Furthermore, a Palaeolithic axe was discovered within the Manor Park area (SMR 060578).

3.2 Roman

The DBA of the site noted that the proposed redevelopment lies close to the course of the London to Colchester Roman road, which generally follows the line of the Romford Road, *circa* 150m to the north of the site. Further, an additional possible Roman road has been identified/conjectured to the west of the site, following the course of High Street North (SMR 062598). The archaeological potential for recovering Roman remains on the site was assessed in the DBA as 'low to moderate'. Margary in his discussion of the Roman roads noted that: *'The crossing place at Iceland Wharf, Old Ford, has been well established, and from its eastern road ran north-eastward through Stratford, though its course through Forest Gate and Manor Park appears to be slightly distorted from the true line. However, after crossing the River Roding its course through Ilford is remarkably well preserved'*³. The site also lies just to the east of High street North, which may follow the line of another Roman road. The DBA concluded that if this is the case then the site lies approximately 150m southeast of the juncture of these two roads⁴.

3.3 Later History: Medieval to the current day

Several early maps of the area such as Andrew and Drury's Map of 1776-1777, the Mudge 'Map of Essex' of 1805, and the OS surveyors' drawings dating to the early 19th century are of too small scale and do not show any detail for the Little Ilford/Manor Park area. John Rocque's map of 1746 and John Chapman and Peter André's 'Map of the County of Essex from the Actual Survey' (surveyed 1772-4, published 1777) show the site in open fields/pasture just south of 'White Post' and north of 'Little Ilford Lane'. This appears to be the way the area remained until the residential expansion of the area during the 1850s and 1860s with terraced housing and a road being built on the site (see Fig.2).

³ Margary I., 1955, p.215

⁴ Sadarangani, F. (February 2003) An Archaeological Desk Top Assessment of land at Avenue Primary School, Meanley Road, Manor Park, London Borough of Newham E12 6AR'. *Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. In house publication*

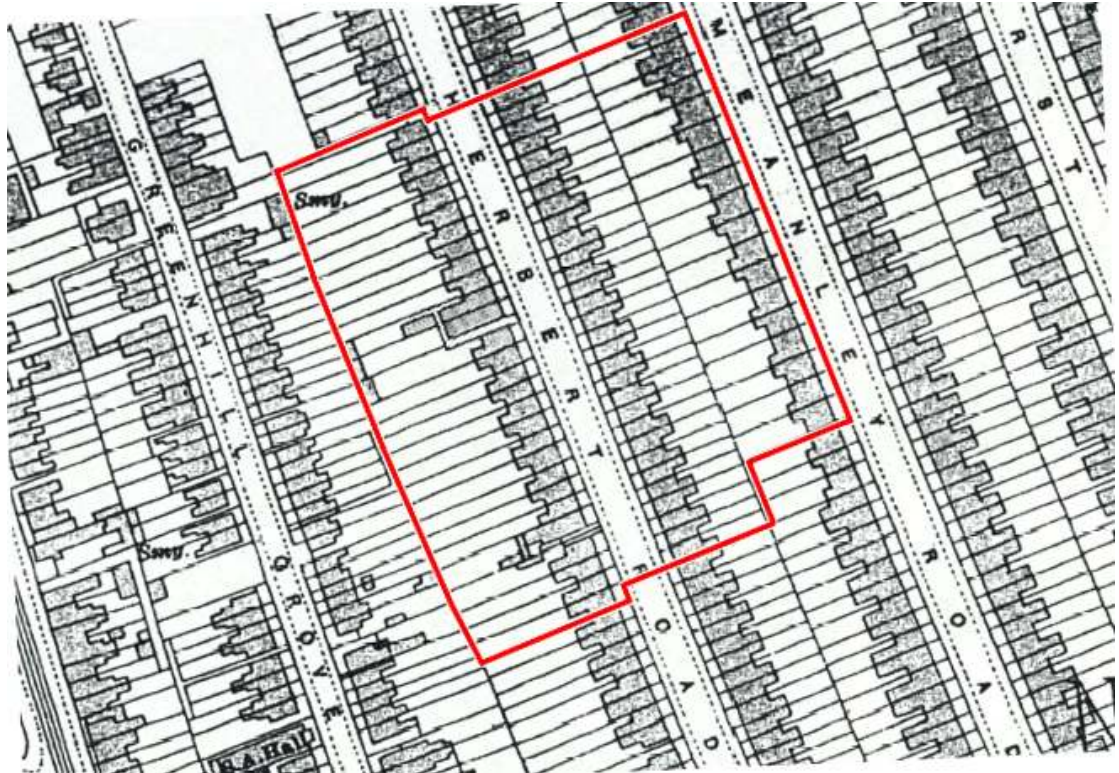


Fig.2: OS 25inch map of c.1920 with site outline superimposed

4 Archaeological research questions

The objectives of this archaeological watching brief included contributing to knowledge of the archaeology of the area through the recording of any remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks. Particular attention was made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits. The fieldwork presented an opportunity to address the following general and specific research questions:

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric to medieval activity, and what is the nature of this?
- Is there any evidence for the line of the Roman road or Roman roadside settlement?
- What evidence is there for medieval and post-medieval activity in the area?
- At what level do natural deposits survive at this location?
- Can the watching brief contribute to research objectives for London archaeology?

5 Methodology

5.1 Standards

The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (in particular, *Standards and Practice in Archaeological Fieldwork, Guidance Paper 3*) and to the standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (*Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*). Overall management of the project was undertaken by a full member of the Institute.

5.2 Fieldwork

The archaeological watching brief took place during contractors' groundworks, and involved two archaeologists on site as required to monitor works and to investigate and record any archaeological remains. Excavation of the trenches was undertaken by a 360° machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket to enable archaeological remains to be cleanly recorded prior to further disturbance.

When archaeological remains were exposed adequate time was given for investigation and recording, although every effort was made not to disrupt the contractors' programme.

The recording system followed the procedures set out in the Museum of London recording manual. By agreement with MoLA the recording and drawing sheets used were directly compatible with those developed by the Museum.

Archaeological deposits and features were investigated and recorded in stratigraphic sequence, and where appropriate finds and other dating evidence recovered. Archaeological deposits and features were recorded as appropriate on *proforma* trench sheets, and drawn in plan with measured sketches taken of sample sections. The investigations were recorded on a general site plan and related to the Ordnance Survey grid. The fieldwork record was supplemented as appropriate by digital photography.

Close liaison was maintained with the groundworks team to ensure a presence on site as and when necessary. The Client and the representatives of English Heritage were kept advised of the progress of the fieldwork.

6 Post-excavation work

The fieldwork was followed by off-site assessment and compilation of a report, and by ordering and deposition of the site archive.

6.1 Finds and samples

Finds were treated in accordance with the appropriate guidelines, including the Museum of London's *'Standards for the Preparation of Finds to be permanently retained by the Museum of London'*. Finds and artefacts were retained and bagged with unique numbers related to the context record, although some material was discarded following assessment. Assessment was undertaken by appropriately qualified staff.

6.2 Report procedure

Copies of this report will be supplied to the Client, English Heritage and the local planning authority and the local studies library.

A short summary of the fieldwork has been appended to this report using the OASIS Data Collection Form, and in paragraph form suitable for publication within the 'excavation round-up' of the *London Archaeologist*.

7 The site archive

The records from the archaeological project will be ordered in line with MoL *Guidelines for the Preparation of Archaeological Archives* and will be deposited in the Museum of London Archaeological Archive.

8 Results

- 8.1 3 large, open cut, soakaway trenches were observed in preparation for new school buildings at The Avenue Primary School. These are recorded below in the order in which they were observed, refer to Fig.3 for location.



Fig.3: Plan of site showing location of trenches in blue, numbered in the order in which they were observed. The two new build areas are shown in red

8.2 Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned E-W in the car park area north of the main entrance off of Meanley Road. It was approximately 23m long x 5.2m wide and 1.23m deep. Stratigraphy comprised an imported clayey topsoil, 0.22m deep, overlying a darker buried humic soil, of 0.22m depth and representing a former ground surface. This buried topsoil overlay 0.25-0.30m of subsoil, a lighter mid-brown sandy silt. This in turn overlay 6 accumulated layers of natural gravels and sands, ranging from coarse, orange-brown, unsorted natural gravels in the upper levels to pebbly sands, fine sands, and compact sandy gravels in the lower levels. These deposits amounted to the bottom 0.49m of the trench and continued beyond the base of the trench for an unquantified depth.

The only archaeological features observed were a small pit, high up in the section, and a large square ended feature in the base of the trench.

The pit comprised a straight-sided cut, 0.23m wide x 0.32m deep containing a rich humic topsoil fill and puddled chalk. Several sherds of flowerpot and late Victorian pottery/china were recovered from this fill. The feature cut through the buried subsoil and was sealed by the buried topsoil. The pit was therefore interpreted as a garden feature associated with Victorian terraced housing that once crossed the site.



Fig.4: *Trench 1 south facing section with garden feature, (centre), sealed by buried topsoil*

The large feature was observed halfway along the base of the trench, and measured 5m long (continuing beyond the limit of excavation to the south), by about 4m wide, the northern end was squared off and with rounded corners. It too was observed high up in the section, sealed by topsoil and was filled by a modern dark-grey silty-clay containing Victorian debris including a glass bottle and a button stamped with the motto 'stat veritas'. It was not investigated further.



Fig.5: Trench 1 facing ENE with large pit feature in the base and small pit in section by scale

8.3 Trench 2

Trench 2 was located in the SW corner of the playing field, west of the playground. It was aligned E-W measuring approximately 26m in length x 5m wide and up to 1.57m deep. The basic stratigraphy was the same as that observed in Trench 1, 0.16m of imported topsoil lay on a bed of concrete rubble 0.20m thick. This overlay up to 0.53m of buried, light to mid-brown clay-silt based subsoil which overlay 4 layers of naturally accumulated gravels and sands, making up the bottom 0.75m of the trench.

The concrete bedding material was lain down to act as a levelling layer for the imported topsoil and to landscape the ground surface post demolition of the terraced housing that once occupied the site. The remains of some brickwork footings were observed in the north facing section of the trench towards the eastern end. Surviving up to 2 courses and comprised of mixed red and yellow stock bricks they were bonded with cement, the footings themselves were also bedded on a layer of concrete. The footings truncated the buried subsoil and overlay a construction cut for a ceramic drain that probably served the Victorian terraces, (see Fig.2)

No further archaeology was observed in Trench 2.



Fig.6: North facing section of Trench 2. Footings of former terraced house and construction cut for drain



Fig.7: Sample of west facing section of Trench 2

8.4 Trench 3

Trench 3 was located in the SE corner of the site in a former car park, opposite the school house to the south and playground to the west. It was aligned E-W and measured 13.5m long x 7.5m wide and between 1.2m-1.65m deep, becoming shallower to the north and west. The underlying stratigraphy was similar to that observed in Trenches 1 and 2. A modern tarmac surface, 0.15m thick bedded on two layers of pink and grey aggregate measuring 0.17m thick overlay up to 0.46m of buried light-mid brown subsoil. This subsoil overlay 4 layers of orange-brown and burgundy-red gravels and light brown sands with evidence of iron panning.

In the north facing section a large portion of wall associated with the former Victorian terraced housing was observed, 1.15m from the eastern end and surviving westwards for 5.5m. It was cut through the buried subsoil and sealed by the aggregates and tarmac surface. It comprised an E-W aligned wall with stubs of N-S returns either end. It survived to at least 1.30m high and continued below the base of the trench and was constructed using yellow stock bricks irregularly bonded using cement. It probably represents the junction of two of the terraced houses seen in Fig.2

No further archaeology was observed in Trench 3.



Fig.8: North facing section of Trench 3 showing wall of former terraced house



Fig.9: *Oblique shot of wall in Trench 3. Facing SE*



Fig.10: *Sample of West-facing section of Trench 3*

9 Conclusions

Observations undertaken during groundworks at Avenue Primary School revealed that the site appears to be sterile in terms of pre-19th century archaeology. Observations were limited to the remnants of Victorian terraced housing that once crossed the site, N-S, as extensions of the terraced housing still present along Meanley Road and Nine Acres Close. As discussed with Jane Sidell of English Heritage these have low-grade archaeological importance due to their date and the existing terraces still standing.

No evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity or Roman roadside settlement was observed in the trenches and natural gravel deposits were observed surviving approximately 0.70m below the modern ground surface. The research questions outlined in the WSI have therefore been addressed to a satisfactory degree relative to the site.

10 Bibliography

Compass Archaeology, (2011) *The Avenue Primary School, Meanley Road, Lower Ilford, London Borough of Newham. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, Compass Archaeology in house publication

Margary, I D, (1955) *Roman Roads in Britain*, London

Sadarangani, F. (February 2003) *An Archaeological Desk Top Assessment of land at Avenue Primary School, Meanley Road, Manor Park, London Borough of Newham E12 6AR*. Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. in house publication

APPENDIX 1: OASIS Form

OASIS ID: compassa1-108544

Project details

Project name	Avenue Primary School, Meanley Road, Watching Brief, AVE11
Short description of the project	An Archaeological Watching Brief was conducted at Avenue Primary School in the London Borough of Newham, in preparation for the construction of new school buildings during July and August 2011. Three large, open cut, soakaway trenches were observed. No significant archaeological deposits were observed beyond a buried subsoil and several instances of remains relating to Victorian terraced housing that once crossed the site. These properties were destroyed by bombing during WW2 and the site sat vacant until the building of the school. The majority of the exposed deposits were natural gravels devoid of archaeology.
Project dates	Start: 25-07-2011 End: 18-08-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	AVE11 and newh 006 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BUTTON Post Medieval
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON NEWHAM NEWHAM Avenue Primary School
Postcode	E12 6AR

Study area	350.85 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 4223 8548 51.5497602315 0.05157966308980 51 32 59 N 000 03 05 E Point
Site coordinates	TQ 4226 8535 51.5485843864 0.05195951700080 51 32 54 N 000 03 07 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 8.83m Max: 9.96m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Compass Archaeology
Project brief originator	English Heritage/Department of Environment
Project design originator	Compass Archaeology
Project director/manager	Gill King
Project supervisor	James Aaronson
Project supervisor	Compass Archaeology
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Jerram Falkus Construction Ltd.

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	Yes
Physical Archive recipient	To be confirmed

Physical Contents	'Metal'
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London archive
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Survey','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London Archive
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Map','Plan','Report','Survey ','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Avenue Primary School, Meanley Road, London Borough of Newham E12, An Archaeological Watching Brief
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Aaronson, J
Date	2011
Issuer or publisher	Compass Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	5-7 Southwark Street
Description	Short report of the results of the watching brief. Includes historical, archaeological, geological and topographical background of the site, details of the methodology used, photographs and descriptions of all trenches monitored, and brief conclusions reached.
Entered by	James Aaronson (james.aaronson@gmail.com)
Entered on	31 August 2011

APPENDIX II: London Archaeologist Summary

Site Address: Avenue Primary School, Meanly Road, London Borough of Newham E12
Project Type: Watching Brief
Dates of Fieldwork: 27th July 2011 – 18th August 2011
Site Code: AVE11
Supervisor: James Aaronson
NGR: TQ 4224 8543 (centre)
Funding Body: Jerram Falkus Construction Ltd.

An Archaeological Watching Brief was conducted at Avenue Primary School in the London Borough of Newham during July and August 2011, in preparation for the construction of new school buildings.

Three large, open cut, soakaway trenches were observed. No significant archaeological deposits were observed beyond a buried subsoil and several instances of remains relating to Victorian terraced housing that once crossed the site. Some of these properties were destroyed by bombing during WW2 and the site sat vacant until the building of the school. The majority of the exposed deposits were natural banded gravels, devoid of archaeology, surviving from as high as 0.44m below modern ground level to the limit of excavation.